

The L O V E R.

By MARMADUKE MYRTLE, Gent.

*She dropt a Tear, and Sighing seem'd to say,
Young Maidens Marry: Marry while you may.*

Flatman.

Saturday, April 10. 1714.

I AM apt to believe the Circumstances of the following Letter to be unfeigned, therefore shall not labour to make them more entertaining by fabulous Ornaments. I shall have, I dare say, enough to do in the Progress of the Matter, to shew my Skill in Love, therefore lay the following Letter before the Town, as a plain Narrative of what, I fear, will have more Incidents in it than it should have, were I my self either the Son or the Father in the Narration. I appeal to the Tea-Tables on the Matter.

Dear Mr. MYRTLE,

I Have long had a secret and (I hope no Criminal) Ambition to appear in your Writings, and an equal Desire to be under your Direction. If therefore you have Kindness enough to gratifie the Vanity of an enamoured Female (who has a mind to be admired in Coffee-houses, and is willing to believe, that by a little of your Management she may make a tolerable figure among your Lovers;) and to convince the World that you are resolved to be as good as your Word, by your readiness to give your Sage Advice to those who need it, and humbly sue for it; I earnestly entreat you to Print me off to morrow, and at the same time to publish your Opinion of the following Case: For the Gentleman, who next my self is more concern'd in it, has perused the Letter I now presume to send you, and has positively declared he will stand to your Determination.

Mr. Careless is a Gentleman of the Middle-Temple: He was sent thither very young to Study the Law. He has a Vivacity in all his Words and Actions, which has acquired him the Esteem and good Graces of a great many of our Sex. This kind of Happiness made him entirely neglect the chief Design which brought him up to London. Cook upon Littleton grew mouldy and dusty in his Solitary Study, while he shined among the Ladies in his Coat turned up with Velvet, and negligently grac'd with Oil and Powder. He better knew how to write a *Billet doux* than to Engross a Bill, and he was much more expert in repeating Scraps of Plays, than in wording a Petition. A certain Art he has of saying the most common things after an extraordinary manner, was of very great use to him in effectually recommending him to those Ladies, who are fond of that kind of Innocent Mirth which keeps Virtue always in danger, and consequently alarmed, and not in a stupid Security which tends neither to Virtue or Vice. — But alas!

(Price Two Pence.)

where am I going? — I ask ten thousand Pardons, dear Mr. MYRTLE, for this long Preamble. What I am going to consult you in is this. I am a young Woman who has been but Fourteen these 3 Years past (tho' to you I may venture to own, that I was Six and twenty the 1st Day of May last). My Father was an Officer in the Army, and tho' pretty well stricken in Years, yet no Man was a greater Encourager of Mirth and Diversion than himself; this Turn of Humour in the good old Man, made him extremely pleas'd with Mr. Careless, and unless the Busyness of his Family required his more serious Attention, he thought his Hours past slowly on, if young Careless happened to be absent from our House. This Gentleman's close Intimacy with my Father, gave him frequent Opportunities of being in my Company; and he has often in gayety of Heart called me his Maria, his Mistress, his Charmer, and has told me a thousand times over he was in Love with me, in a way which goes for no more than *Madam I like your Company*. However, Mr. MYRTLE, you who seem no Stranger to the Weaknesses incident to our Sex, can't but imagine that a single Woman, and no profess'd Enemy to Matrimony, was not displeased at such like Declarations from a pretty Fellow that was young, lively, brisk, and did not want Wit. Tho' he was thus agreeable, and I neither inferrible of his Perfections, nor displeased at his Addresses to me, yet my Modesty laid too great a Restriction on me, to permit me to discover to him at first the secret Satisfaction I took in hearing him praise me, and how I was delighted when I listened to the Declaration of his Passion. What he prattled at last began to dwell upon me, I grew afraid that all his Professions of this Nature were meer Amusements to him, 'till one Evening when we were all very Merry in the Parlour, dancing Country Dances, and playing Plays, he said some what to me in Secret, which I fear I shall all my Life wish I had never heard.

I remember we were engaged at a Play called Servants and Mistresses, when, among the Variety of Gentlemen which were given me to chuse out of, I pitched upon Mr. Careless as a Gentleman the most agreeable to my Fancy of any in the Company. Upon which he rose up, made me a very modest and respectful Bow; and when, according to the Custom of the Play, he had given a very graceful, and methought somewhat awful Salute, he whistled me and wished, with a Sigh, that he might be so happy as to be my Choice in earnest —

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I hear the Words still tingle in my Ear. I stole my Eye towards Mr. Careless the whole Night after; and if he happened to compliment any of the Ladies, I took particular Notice of her Countenance, I could not help thinking her very ugly, and that she did not at all deserve to have any thing said in her Praise: If He smiled at my Cousin, who was tolerably handsome, I was ready to cry; and when, in a fondling manner, he took my Sister Sally on his Knee, me thought my poor Heart grew as heavy as Lead. Well! certainly my Inquietudes all that Night are not, and to Mr. Myrtle, need not to be described — But, Mr. Myrtle, to make short of my Story, by mutual Endearments and a reciprocal Desire to please, Mr. Careless and I, from that time forward, became lovely and agreeable in each others Eyes. I thought my self happy in his Company, and a Sight of him never failed to fill me with the most ravishing Delight. He would often discourse to me of Marriage, and long till he was of Age that he might have me all his own. I convers'd with him as with the Man who was to have been my Companion for Life. I seldom dres'd but on the Day I expected a Visit from him — Thus we lived and loved, for some Months, till the malicious World talked of our Behaviour, and made Mr. Careless's Father acquainted with our whole Proceedings. He sends for his Son. O, Mr. Myrtle! how shall I describe my Concern for his Departure? I dreaded his Father's Power over him, and trembled when I considered that his Father, who was able to leave him a good Fortune, might possibly awe him into a neglect of me. Mr. Careless leaves me and London, in Obedience to his Father's Command. As soon as he got home, he sent me Word his Father severely menac'd him, and swore solemnly he would not leave him a Groat if he continu'd to love me, or entertained the least Thought of making me his Wife. In Mr. Careless's Absence my Father and Mother both die, and I survived them an Orphan of a very slender Fortune; Mr. Careless writes a second Letter, wherein he lets me know, that his Father persists in his Resolution, however he assures me, that if I pleased he would post to London unknown to the old Man, and there marry me. I now had a difficult Card to play. I reasoned thus; that if I took Mr. Careless at his Word, I should thereby prove the unhappy Instrument of making him guilty of Disobedience, and, by incurring his Father's Displeasure, put his Fortune in danger. I thought it would be no Argument of my Affection to involve the young Man I pretended to love into these Dangers. After some struggle my Passion gave way to Prudence, and I resolved to lose my Lover, rather than take him at the Expence of his Fame or Discretion. After I had wept heartily I writ to him a Letter in the Style of one who had never loved; I told him I believed it most advisable to lay aside the Thoughts of a Match which was attended with many Difficulties, and could not but prove a very disadvantageous one to him, and, if his Father remained irreconcileable, to me too. Mr. Careless followed my Advice, he commended my Freedom, ceased to be my Lover, but continued to be my Friend ever since.

Mr. Careless is now at Age, unmarried, has attained to a plentiful Fortune without the Assistance of his Father: I am still unprovided for, and confess Mr. Careless is this Moment as much Master of my Heart as ever. Dear Mr. Myrtle, be speedy in your Determination, and say what you think should be Mr. Careless's Sentiments towards me. I wait with impatience for to-morrow's Pa-

per, which is seriously to determine the Fate of your constant Reader.

Prudence Lovelock.

It is a very hazardous Point to determine a Matter attended with such nice Circumstances, but supposing the Facts are honestly stated, if the Father of Careless has any taste of Merit, he ought to give his Consent to a Lady to whom he owes so generous a Refusal of his Son, rather than be his Daughter, when it was incommodeous to the Circumstances of his Family; if an Accession of Wealth is thrown in, which ought to be accounted as a Portion lent by Providence to take off all prudential Objections that stood between the young Lady and her Happiness, I won't say what the Son should do, but if the Father does his Duty it will have the same good Effect on the Lovers. Till that is refused, I shall not play the Casuist in a Case wherein no one can err, but with a Guilt which cannot but be obvious to any Man who has the least Sense of Humanity.

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